



Conservation Practice Overview

July 2022

Subsurface Drain (Code 606)

A subsurface drain is a conduit, such as corrugated plastic tubing, tile, or pipe, installed beneath the ground surface to collect and convey drainage water.

Practice Information

Subsurface drains are used to improve the environment for crops, reduce erosion, improve water quality, regulate water tables, collect groundwater for beneficial uses, or to remove salts and other contaminants from the soil profile.



Subsurface drainage is used in areas having a high water table where the benefits of lowering the water level are worth the expense. The practice also applies to areas that will benefit from controlling groundwater and surface runoff. The soil must meet certain suitability requirements and an adequate outlet must be available to assure proper drainfunction.

The operation and maintenance of a subsurface drainage system includes periodic inspections and prompt repair of system components (e.g., structures for water control, underground outlets, vents, drain outlets, and trash and rodent guards). In cold climates, winterization protection from freezing conditions is necessary.

Common Associated Practices

Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Subsurface Drain (Code 606) is commonly applied with CPSs such as Integrated Pest Management (Code 595), Nutrient Management (Code 590), Surface Drain, Main or Lateral (Code 608), Underground Outlet (Code 620), Critical Area Planting (Code 342), and Drainage Water Management (Code 554).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.